

## Sifting truth from falsehood

There are many strange things happening in churches these days. People are being made to eat grass, drink poison, and many other strange practices in churches. Most of these are obviously false and easily rejectable. The problem is with the more deceptive practices that aren't as obviously false as they are so close to the truth. How do we sift the truth from falsehood?

1 John 2: 18 – 27

### 1) Deception in the last times

- Deception in the last days was something that John learnt from Jesus
  - Matthew 24: 3 – 4 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many.
  - Here Jesus was referring to false Christs, or antichrists, coming at the end of the age.
- Paul also referred to the last days:
  - 2 Timothy 3: 1; 5 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days....having a form of godliness but denying its power.
- Jesus, John and Paul weren't talking about people from other religions, although they could be included in the false Christs or antichrists. They were talking about people who call themselves Christians and even fellowshiped amongst us. This is what the deception is.
  - 1 John 2: 19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.
- What we need to be looking out for are not people from other religions, but wolves in sheep's clothing.
  - They look like believers, they talk like believers, they are often warm, welcoming and pleasant to talk to, but they dishonour Jesus by many of their practices and teachings.
  - 2 Corinthians 11: 4 For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.
- Some aspects of the antichrist – the false Jesus
  - Denies that Jesus is the Messiah
  - Denies that Jesus came in the flesh – that Jesus was fully human
  - Denies the divinity of Jesus – that Jesus is fully God
  - Denies the crucifixion of Jesus for the sins of the world.
  - Denies the resurrection of Jesus
  - Denies the power of Jesus to live a righteous and abundant life
  - Denies the hope that is found in Jesus
  - Denies the glory that is meant only for Jesus
- The one who denies the true Jesus denies the Father as well.
  - Christian packaging isn't the same as authentic Christianity.
- There are a number of times when Jesus exposed the religious packaging that didn't meet his standards
  - The ten virgins who kept watch of which five were foolish and were unprepared. (Matthew 25: 1 – 13)
  - The sheep and the goats. (Matthew 25: 31 – 46)
  - Those who call him Lord Lord and did many things in His name. (Matthew 7: 21 – 23)

## **2) An anointing of truth**

- True believers should never be led astray because they have an anointing from the Holy One and they know the truth.
  - John 16: 13 When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.
  - As much as the anointing is to empower us to live holy lives, for ministry, to develop Christ-like character and exercise the gifts of the Spirit, He also leads us into all truth.
  - This isn't just knowing truth in our heads but in practice as well.
- There is a correlation between what we believe and what we do.
  - If we believe that something is true and right we will practice it.
  - If we believe that something is false we will avoid practicing it.
  - Ultimately we know what people believe by what they practice and not by what they say.
    - If we say we should honour our parents, but then dishonour them then we really believe that it's ok to dishonour them.
    - If we say we believe in the gifts of the Spirit, but never use them then we probably don't really believe in the gifts of the Spirit.
    - If we say that stealing is a sin, but still steal then they really believe that stealing is good and not a sin.
- The Holy Spirit leads us into doing what is good doctrine and good practice that ultimately brings glory and honour to God.
  - John 16: 14 He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.
- The anointing teaches us about all things, and it is real not counterfeit.
  - The false teaches – antichrists – have counterfeit anointings that make them do extraordinary things at times making people believe them to be real.
  - Prophecy at a church that was accurate but not from God. The whole spirit of it wasn't right and was deceptive.

## **3) Keep yourselves in the Son and the Father**

- The truth of the Gospel, which we heard from the beginning when it was shared with us, remains or reside in us. Have its home in us.
  - If this happens then we will remain in the Father and the Son
  - Here we see our continued relationship with all three persons of the Trinity.
  - It is in this relationship that we have the promised eternal life.
  - John 17: 3 Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.
- We keep ourselves from being deceived and are able to sift truth from falsehood by being full of the Holy Spirit and having a continued relationship with God in Jesus Christ.
  - This isn't merely a metaphysical relationship, but one based on the truth of His Word which is our measure of truth.